United Nations S/PV.4805

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4805th meeting

Wednesday, 6 August 2003, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wehbe	(Syrian Arab Republic)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Antonio
	Bulgaria	Mr. Raytchev
	Cameroon	Mr. Chungong Ayafor
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Mexico	Mrs. Arce de Jeannet
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Russian Federation	Mr. Smirnov
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Letter dated 31 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/287)

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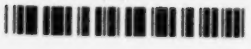

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 31 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/287)

The President (spoke in Arabic): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Fiji, Japan, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Dauth (Australia), Mr. Savua (Fiji), Mr. Motomura (Japan) and Mr. MacKay (New Zealand) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Noel Sinclair, Head of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Sinclair to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Noel Sinclair, Head of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Sinclair: Since the briefing given to the Council on 28 March 2003 by Mr. Danilo Türk, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement has taken some dramatic steps forward. The most significant of these was the completion of stage II of weapons disposal, as required by the Agreement. Since there could be no numerical criterion to follow to determine that completion, the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) decided to base itself on the principle of effectiveness — how the people of Bougainville feel as a result of what has been achieved.

UNPOB therefore undertook an island-wide process of consultations, in the course of which it was able to ascertain that the people of the island were feeling a level of confidence and security that they had never felt at any time since the crisis ended. The people expressed a uniform desire for UNPOB to verify the end of stage II of weapons disposal, so that elections for their autonomous Government could be held as soon as possible. They were, of course, aware of the presence of uncollected weapons in the various communities, held by former combatants, by businessmen, by criminals, and also by supporters of Francis Ona, whose continuing separation from the peace process is a source of concern to them all. However, they did not consider that these factors should delay implementation of the Peace Agreement. They expressed much faith in what their autonomous Government could do to deal with the challenges posed by outstanding weapons and by Francis Ona.

Recognizing the very fundamental and serious nature of the responsibility for verification, and recognizing also the consequences of that act, UNPOB gave the most careful and detailed consideration to the views expressed by the people, weighing the risks involved in going ahead with the Agreement against those involved in not doing so. On the basis of such reflection and analysis, UNPOB formed the judgement — and so informed the Peace Process Consultative Committee — that stage II of weapons disposal had come to an end and that the weapons disposal plan had served its purpose.

On 30 July last, UNPOB made this verification and certification to the National Government. The Minister of Bougainville Affairs gave the appropriate advice to the Governor General, and the internal procedures required for the head of State to gazette the relevant notice have been observed. It is expected that

very shortly the constitutional amendments and the Organic Law on Peace-Building on Bougainville will become fully operational. With that act, a new era will have dawned in the relations between the National Government and Bougainville, and a significant milestone will have been reached in the implementation of the Peace Agreement. The stage will have been set for the next steps to be taken, including the holding of elections for a Bougainville autonomous Government, in the context of the autonomy arrangements.

Where preparations for autonomy are concerned, consultations have been taking place between the National Government and the Bougainville Administration on a number of fronts simultaneously — on the making of a Bougainville Constitution, on law and justice, and on the Interim Joint Supervisory Body, which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of arrangements for the establishment and operation of the autonomous Bougainville Government.

Where the funding of constitutional and electoral activities is concerned, the Bougainville side is currently preparing a detailed budget that would cover further meetings of the Bougainville Constitutional Commission and of a Constituent Assembly, which would finalize and adopt a Constitution, as well as other elections-related expenses. Following the approval of the budget by the provincial authorities, decisions need to be made on the sources of funding.

Some work still needs to be done in all of these areas, but UNPOB believes that the completion of verification and certification will serve as a stimulus for the advancement of these activities. The Minister for Bougainville Affairs is due to visit the island very shortly. UNPOB expects that this visit will be an opportunity for all outstanding obligations to be cleared, so that movement towards the full implementation of the autonomy arrangements can proceed with all deliberate speed.

Meanwhile, the process of weapons collection continues, and will continue — for verification of stage II does not mean the end of that process. UNPOB is therefore pushing ahead with its Operation Continuing Vigilance and Final Phase programmes, which seek the collection of greater numbers of uncontained weapons and their storage in secure conditions. Last week we contained 20 such weapons in two locations on the island.

According to the Peace Agreement, the parties have four and half months after the coming into effect of the constitutional amendments to make a decision on the final fate of the contained weapons. The National Government and the Bougainville Resistance Force have both indicated a preference for destruction, while the Bougainville Revolutionary Army prefers secure storage. The two factions are due to meet shortly in order to seek a unified position on the question of the final fate of the weapons. UNPOB has been requested to preside over that consultation, which will take place during the last week of August.

In keeping with the concerns expressed by the people in the pre-verification consultations, it is essential that efforts be intensified by all concerned to ensure Mr. Ona's participation in the peace process, or, at the very least, that he maintains his position of respect for that process. UNPOB, for its part, will do all that is possible to help achieve that goal.

In the remaining months of our mandate, UNPOB will continue to work hard to ensure that the peace process keeps moving forward. This will require sustained effort and continuing commitment by the parties to the Peace Agreement. On the basis of experience, we are confident that we will be able to continue to rely on all of the parties to manifest these attitudes. We believe also that we will be able to continue to rely upon the support of the regional partners and of the international community in general.

In this process, we are happy to have the cooperation and support of the newly established Bougainville Transition Team, the successor to the Peace Monitoring Group, which completed its mission on 30 June last. We already have a relationship of solid cooperation with the BTT. We exchange views and information on developments in the peace process. We cooperate in contacts with Bougainvilleans throughout the island, and the BTT played a most valuable role in getting the majority of the participants in the last PPCC meeting to Buka and back to their villages. The BTT is also assisting UNPOB in checking and recording weapons collected, and it also presented its first report on ceasefire violations to the Committee. UNPOB is very grateful for that cooperation of the BTT, and we express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the contributing Governments.

With the withdrawal of UNPOB at the end of this year, a special responsibility will devolve on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in terms of providing continuing international support for Bougianville's peace consolidation efforts. It is essential that UNPOB and the Department of Political Affairs work closely with UNDP in order to ensure continuity of United Nations activities on a sound and sustainable basis after December 2003. To that end, the consultations are under way with UNDP on various issues so as to develop a joint approach for the smooth transition. Meanwhile, UNDP itself is in the process of formulating phase II of its rehabilitation, reconstruction and development programmes on the island.

In summary, therefore, the situation in Bougainville is that stage II of the weapons disposal plan has been declared completed. The parties have already begun to talk seriously among themselves about stage III, for which they have a deadline in the middle of December. While the Bougainvilleans work on this aspect, they are at the same time working to advance the autonomy aspects of the Agreement, most importantly finalization of the Constitution and the holding of elections. There are challenges in all those areas, some of which are huge, but the will is there to persevere and to overcome.

Within the limitations imposed by its current financial situation, the National Government is showing a high level of sensitivity to maintaining its record of compliance with its obligations under the Agreement. The people of Bougainville are showing determination to move beyond weapons and to begin to concentrate on elections, on building institutions and on taking charge of their destiny.

Undergirding all those efforts, UNPOB's impartiality, neutrality and energy remain available to the parties, as we try to ensure that weapons that are collected are kept secure, that outstanding issues in the relations within and between communities are resolved in accordance with Bougainville traditional methods and that Bougainvilleans are well informed about what is happening where implementation of the Agreement is concerned, what the developments signify and what role they can play in advancing them. Closer towards the end of this year, Council members may wish to turn their attention to ways in which the Council can render support to them as they seek to strengthen their peace and make it irreversible.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on the representative of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I would like to preface my comments by saying that I apologize to the President and the Council members for the lateness of the aide-memoire, which I hope was useful, late as it was. We also note that we have sent the members of the Council documentation and statements from the Papua New Guinea Government in the past several weeks.

My delegation appreciates and thanks the Security Council for the opportunity to open consideration of an agenda item of the greatest importance to the people and Government of Papua New Guinea: the peace process and the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. I deliberately refer to the item as one for consideration, rather than debate, as it concerns matters on which there are no significant differences among members of the United Nations or the parties involved in the peace process on the ground.

There are three issues that I will cover. The first one is verification, the second is regional support for the peace process, and the third is preparations for autonomy, restoration and development.

In terms of verification, the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) has judged that implementation of the agreed weapons disposal plan contained in the Bougainville Peace Agreement has progressed to the point at which it can verify that stage II of the plan has been achieved. Stage II is defined as the time when weapons are held in secure, double-locked containers, with the containers supervised and one of the keys held by UNPOB.

Ambassador Sinclair submitted his report verifying and certifying that achievement to the National Government on Tuesday, 29 July 2003. The presentation took place at the National Parliament House of Papua New Guinea, in Port Moresby, in front of the acting Prime Minister, Hon. Bart Philemon, ministers and members of Parliament, diplomats accredited to Papua New Guinea, senior officials and media representatives who came to witness and report on the event. Consistent with the requirements of the new Part XIV of the Papua New Guinea Constitution, which gives legal effect to the Bougainville Peace Agreement, the responsible minister officially then

advised the Governor-General of Papua New Guinea that the report had been received.

The notice bringing the new Part XIV of the Constitution and the new organic law on peace-building in Bougainville into full operation is expected to appear in the National Gazette later this week. I note that Ambassador Sinclair also mentioned that in his presentation.

The framework for the establishment and the gradual assumption of increasing responsibility for the exercise of powers, functions and control over resources and the day-to-day operations of the autonomous Bougainville Government will then be in place. So will the guarantee for a referendum among Bougainvilleans on Bougainville's political future in another 10 to 15 years, when certain agreed conditions apply. The referendum will include a separate independence for Bougainville as an available option. The outcome will be subject to the final decision-making authority of the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea.

A significant feature of the new constitutional arrangements is that they can be changed only if a proposal for change is supported by a two-thirds absolute majority of members of the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea and by the Bougainville legislature set up under those arrangements.

As Ambassador Sinclair has recognized in his verification report, the changes that follow the verification report mean that "relations between the National Government and Bougainville become transformed for all time".

The readiness with which the parties involved in the Bougainville peace process agreed to make UNPOB responsible for initiating such critical constitutional changes was a mark of the faith all of them had in the neutrality, independence and integrity of the United Nations and its representative on the ground, Ambassador Sinclair and UNPOB. The reception the parties gave the draft report, when the Chairman, Ambassador Sinclair, presented it to the Peace Process Consultative Committee (PPCC) on 25 July, showed that they continue to have similar confidence in the United Nations, UNPOB and Ambassador Sinclair. The way in which all the parties have maintained such confidence at a critical turning point in the peace process, when uncertainty is otherwise likely to rise, is very much to the credit of the United Nations bodies and officials involved in this process. It is also a product of the verification process itself.

As members of the Security Council will recall, Papua New Guinea has always believed that verification should be based on the widest possible consultation. Our position has been endorsed by all of the parties involved in the Bougainville peace process. UNPOB has applied it with energy and care. Genuine verification cannot just be a matter of counting the number of guns handed in, or of comparing that number with an uncertain estimate of the weapons at large previously or now.

As Ambassador Sinclair rightly observes in his verification report, the Bougainville Peace Agreement is intended to lay a solid foundation for the creation of a society characterized by genuine peace and the restoration of civil authority under a democratically elected autonomous Government. The foundations of such a society can only be feelings of mutual security and confidence within and among various communities of Bougainville. The weapons disposal plan is an essential element in promoting a secure foundation for the required feelings of mutual security and confidence.

It was accordingly appropriate — indeed necessary — for Ambassador Sinclair to proceed on the basis of consultations, after consulting widely at community level around Bougainville with former combatants and political leaders of all major factions and with the Transitional Consultative Council, in which leaders of the main political bodies representing the people of Bougainville consult with each other and the National Government of Papua New Guinea. Ambassador Sinclair was also willing to provide clarification of his verification report, when requested, to the Government of Papua New Guinea.

The final step in the process, before Ambassador Sinclair formally submitted the final report to the National Government, was the presentation of the report to the PPCC, where the parties involved in the Bougainville peace process could receive and review it together. The only significant absentee from the consultations was Francis Ona and his remaining supporters outside the peace process in the so-called "no-go zone", around the Panguna Mine site.

The consensus of the parties involved in the peace process and the PPCC meeting on 25 July was that the report is balanced, comprehensive and frank. This view was reached in light of a number of considerations, including the way in which consultations had been conducted all around Bougainville, the report's acknowledgement of the work still to be done to rid Bougainville of the fear and threat of the gun, and UNPOB's careful assessment of the risks involved in deciding whether and when to verify and certify that stage II has been achieved.

In basing its assessment on the evidence provided both from practical weapons disposal and through widespread, in-depth consultations, UNPOB acknowledges that it alone is responsible for making the final judgment on verification. That is the basis on which the parties agreed that UNPOB should verify and certify stage II of the agreed weapons disposal plan. The Government would have it no other way.

The most significant gap in practical weapons disposal and the Bougainville peace process as a whole arises from the way in which Francis Ona and his remaining supporters close to Panguna have chosen to remain outside this process. But even here, progress is being made. In practice, those who continue to remain outside the Bougainville peace process have generally respected the peace which has been achieved.

As the verification report recognizes, citing a letter from Francis Ona to Ambassador Sinclair, the Me'ekamui Defence Force does not intend,

> "to enter into any unnecessary conflict or war. The war is well and truly behind us as our military objectives have been achieved and our struggle must, as it has, progressively move on into new directions and areas."

In such circumstances, it is indeed distressing to see various documents circulating in Bougainville, purportedly expressing the views of Francis Ona and the remaining hard core of Me'ekamui supporters that there is a conspiracy to undermine the Bougainville peace process or undertake other unwelcome activities in Bougainville. The alleged conspiracy is variously said to be between the Government of Papua New Guinea and others — sometimes a mining company or companies, and sometimes the United Nations. The circulation of such untrue and implausible ideas is, at best, a sign of isolation.

For this reason, the Government of Papua New Guinea and other parties involved in the peace process continue to call for reconciliation, and the active involvement of Francis Ona and Me'ekamui in practical peace-building. Now is the time for them to play a direct part in shaping the future Government of Bougainville. The Government of Papua New Guinea continues to recognize the positive contribution Francis Ona and his group have made to the Bougainville peace process by not deliberately disrupting it on the ground.

Meanwhile, the Government continues to urge the Bougainville parties to meet and decide on the final fate of the weapons without further unnecessary delay. I am therefore pleased to be able to inform the United Nations that the PPCC has agreed that the meeting will be held on Nissan Island, in the Bougainville province, as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made, probably in a few weeks.

The Government of Papua New Guinea firmly believes that destroying the guns at the earliest practicable opportunity is the only truly effective option and the only way in which guns will be removed not only physically, but from the minds of the people in Bougainville. It is also the best way by far of ensuring that scarce human and financial resources are not wasted on providing security for guns and containers, but rather used to support the economic and social recovery for which people around Bougainville and the rest of Papua New Guinea continue to work, hope and pray.

Thus, verification and certification of stage II do not mark the end of UNPOB's role and responsibilities on the ground. In citing the initiatives UNPOB is taking to promote further practical weapons disposal, the report recognizes this reality. Not only does UNPOB remain responsible for supervising and holding one of the keys to each stage II container, it has a continuing role in relation to the making and implementation of the decision at stage III of the agreed weapons disposal plan. If the parties do not reach a mutually acceptable agreement at stage III, then UNPOB has a further possible role and responsibility in relation to determining whether or not elections for the autonomous Bougainville Government should go ahead or should be deferred, in which case it will have a say in the length of any deferral.

UNPOB's ongoing role and responsibilities underline the urgency of holding the stage III meeting between the parties to the Bougainville Peace Agreement and implementing its outcome. This means that UNPOB will still have a great deal of very important, indeed critical, work to do in order to complete its agreed assignment under the Bougainville Peace Agreement by the end of this year.

I turn now to regional support for the peace process. The Bougainville peace process has benefited from the generous support not only of the United Nations, but of Papua New Guinea's friends in the region and development cooperation partners around the world.

The neutral regional Truce Monitoring Group (TMG) was established first, in late 1997. It was then replaced by the similarly neutral regional Peace Monitoring Group (PMG), when the agreement implementing the permanent and irrevocable ceasefire was signed on 30 April 1998. Both the TMG and the PMG consisted of personnel from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu. The men and women who served in the ranks, both civilian and military, were unarmed. From a peak of just of over 300 personnel at the start, the PMG has gradually been reduced in size as the peace process gathered strength and become increasingly capable of sustaining itself on the ground.

As members of the Security Council will recall, all of the parties involved in the Bougainville peace process were concerned when it was announced that the PMG would cease operations on 30 June 2003. The gap it would leave would be experienced directly by the people who gained confidence from its continuing presence. It would also be felt by UNPOB, which relied on the PMG for logistical and other forms of support.

I am therefore pleased to report that the contributing countries have agreed to provide a Bougainville Transition Team (BTT) to support the peace process until the end of this year.

The BTT, consisting of 17 civilian personnel from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu, will be much smaller and have a more narrowly focused mandate than the PMG. It will, of course, continue to be unarmed. In view of concerns expressed when the Security Council previously considered the Bougainville peace process and UNPOB, I am pleased to advise that the protocol establishing the BTT gives it the explicit function of cooperating with United Nations observers, on agreed terms and conditions.

Papua New Guinea is grateful for the positive way in which the BTT contributing countries have responded to the request by the National Government, on behalf of the parties, for the continuing availability of a neutral regional body to support the peace process and assist UNPOB logistically and in other ways. Ambassador Sinclair has mentioned some of the ways it is assisting.

Finally, I would like to turn to the preparations for autonomy, restoration and development. Weapons disposal and the full operation of new constitutional arrangements lay the foundations for progress in other areas, but they do not build peace on their own. Given our experience of the challenges involved in implementing major constitutional changes of our own and our close observation of peace processes in other countries, Papua New Guinea is only too well aware of the many diverse and, often, complex challenges which have to be met and overcome.

That is why the Government is working closely with leaders and officials in Bougainville to finalize immediate arrangements to improve policing and access to courts and increase the availability of correctional services in Bougainville. We are also consulting on plans for the medium and long term.

In every case, the Government is conscious of the need to maintain consistency with the letter and spirit of the Bougainville Peace Agreement, including the consultations and cooperation which are the agreed keys to implementation.

Other steps towards creating conditions in which the autonomous Bougainville Government can be established and begin operating include consultations on the development of the Bougainville constitution.

The Government is trying its hardest, in difficult economic and budgetary conditions, to allocate funds, personnel and other support to facilitate progress towards self-sustaining peace and the transition to autonomy in Bougainville. In doing so, we continue to rely on the support of our development cooperation partners. Australia, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand and others should know how much we appreciate the resources they provide.

Among members of the United Nations family of organizations, the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP) stands out for the strong and effective support it provides for practical weapons disposal, community development and the training of former combatants, in particular. The UNDP-coordinated cocoa and coconut rehabilitation project is an especially noteworthy and successful instance of an activity which facilitates both economic and social recovery, as well as the reintegration of former combatants, by providing large numbers of rural smallholders with employment, incomes and hope based on self-help.

The United Nations Children's Fund provides support for restoration and development across a broad range of activities, including immunization, HIV/AIDS awareness, malaria control, education, child protection and trauma counselling.

Other areas in which Papua New Guinea will be seeking advice and other forms of assistance include public sector reform and other preparations for the establishment of the autonomous Bougainville Government.

Priorities include the provision of opportunities for training, re-training and upgrading the skills of public sector personnel and potential recruits. They also include support for capacity-building and institutional strengthening, both in Bougainville and at the national level, so that the cooperation necessary to give full effect to the joint creation embodied in the Bougainville Peace Agreement can receive the support it requires at both ends.

As development cooperation partners work to integrate their activities in Bougainville into national projects and programmes, the Government requests them to continue giving appropriate attention and priority to the particular character of the post-conflict situation in Bougainville. The need to reintegrate former combatants and their communities remains a major concern.

As my remarks have, I believe, made clear, the peace process in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, remains a national priority, pursued on a bipartisan basis. Papua New Guinea is accordingly grateful for the support the international community continues to provide.

The Government has accepted, and acted on, UNPOB's verification report and certification, as the constitutional amendment implementing the Bougainville Peace Agreement requires.

As UNPOB's host, Papua New Guinea will continue to fully support its efforts to fulfil its agreed responsibilities under the Lincoln, ceasefire and Bougainville peace agreements and, in doing so, help to secure lasting peace by peaceful means.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank Ambassador Sinclair for his detailed and clear briefing. More generally, I would like to thank the staff of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) for the work that they have accomplished. I would also like to thank our colleague from Papua New Guinea for the clarifications that he provided. I would further like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Peace Monitoring Group and its contributing countries on their activities.

I would like to make three brief comments. First, the conclusion of stage II of weapons disposal is, of course, a welcome development after more than a year of successive delays. We must now move on to stage III — the final decision on weapons disposal — without delay.

Secondly, we believe that establishing contacts with Francis Ona with a view to bringing him into the peace process should be continued. Such a dialogue should not, however, result in any delay in the priority implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

Thirdly, we would like to encourage the efforts of Papua New Guinea and of all the parties. Such efforts must be directed towards setting a date for the speedy organization of elections in Bougainville, the effective holding of those elections and, finally, the establishment of an autonomous Government.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): Let me first welcome Ambassador Sinclair and thank him very much for his very informative and complete report; we appreciated it very much. I would also like to thank the representative of Papua New Guinea for his statement. He gave us a very encouraging and positive assessment.

I am very pleased that stage II could finally be completed. We greatly appreciate the commitment of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) in that matter. In that context, we would also like to assure the countries participating in the Peace Monitoring Group of our greatest appreciation. We

warmly welcome the further regional engagement of Australia and New Zealand in the Bougainville transition team, in which they will shortly be joined by Fiji and Vanuatu.

We must not, of course, forget the active involvement of the people of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville, without which the ongoing peace process will not be able to succeed. Their support for the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville and their active participation in the weapons collection have led to the verification of stage II. Furthermore, Papua New Guinea showed its commitment to the peace process by facilitating the quick acceptance and implementation of arrangements which were required for the Bougainville Transition Team to take up its work.

Given the full ownership of this process by the people of Bougainville and Papua New Guinea, the departure of the United Nations Office by the end of this year will, in our view, be the right next step. For its last month in action, UNPOB should set out a rigid timetable to ensure the progress of constitutional work. Therefore, all possible assistance should be made available to Ambassador Sinclair and his staff. In our view, the Secretariat is indispensable in this respect.

With regard to stage III, we highly recommend the complete destruction of all weapons, as a lasting peace cannot be ensured otherwise. The parties should be aware that without an agreement in this regard the peace process might be held up and the holding of elections might also be delayed unnecessarily. We hope that the meeting announced by the representative of Papua New Guinea will be successful in that regard.

The achievements reached thus far show that the peace process is under way and will not be stopped. Therefore, efforts to have Francis Ona and his movement join the peace process should be maintained. At the same time, he needs to know and to understand that the peace process and the people of Bougainville cannot wait for him.

In conclusion, let me say that Germany will continue, within the framework of the European Union, to contribute to the further development of a functioning civil society in that region.

Mr. Thomson (United Kingdom): I would like to associate myself with the remarks of the two previous speakers in thanking Ambassador Sinclair very much for his careful account of the situation, welcoming the details that the Ambassador of Papua New Guinea has offered us, congratulating the Peace Monitoring Group on their role and urging continuing regional engagement.

The picture is an upbeat one. We are pleased, of course, that stage II of the weapons disposal plan has taken place. I think it can be fairly said that the new constitutional arrangements that result are historic for Papua New Guinea, and I would like particularly to congratulate Ambassador Sinclair and his Office for their role.

I have just two brief points to draw from this. The first relates to the continuing separation of Francis Ona and his supporters from the peace process. As Ambassador Sinclair said, that must be a source of concern to all. We welcome the efforts of all concerned, including the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), in trying to bring Francis Ona and his supporters on board the peace process. It will be right to continue to try to do so, but I join France and Germany in agreeing that this must in no way delay the peace process.

My second point is an obvious one. It is the need for continued and exclusive focus on delivering progress and momentum in stage III. We do not wish to see any further delays in that process, which means that there are a tight four and a half months within which to work. So, it was good to hear from Ambassador Sinclair and to have confirmed by our colleague from Papua New Guinea the commitment of the Papua New Guinea Government to moving forward briskly on arrangements for autonomy, on the finalization of the constitution, on the transfer of resources to Bougainville and on preparations for early elections. As both Ambassador Sinclair and the representative of Papua New Guinea have underscored, these too, in addition to weapons containment, are essential to building the self-sustaining peace to which we all look forward.

Mr. Simancas (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank the representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), Ambassador Noel Sinclair, for the information that he has just provided. Before the Peace Monitoring Group leaves Bougainville, I would also like to express our gratitude

for the work and support that Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu have provided to Bougainville.

In that regard, Mexico welcomes the decision by those countries to send representatives to the Bougainville Transition Team to follow up on the peace process. That kind of initiative sends the clear message that the international community attaches importance to the advancement of the peace process and the establishment of an autonomous and representative Government in Bougainville.

Finally, stage II of the weapons collection plan has been successfully concluded under the watchful supervision of Ambassador Sinclair. Bearing in mind the experience gained in other conflicts where a delay in the final disposal of collected weapons has been used by some disruptive elements to resume hostilities or return to criminal activities, it is essential for the Security Council to urge the Peace Process Consultative Committee to begin disposal of weapons as soon as possible. In a society that has opted for dialogue, tolerance and understanding, there is simply no place for weapons.

Throughout the peace process, the cooperation of the Government of Papua New Guinea has been essential. It is now important for the State bodies to reach prompt agreement on a draft constitution for the island so that elections may be held as soon as possible to establish an autonomous and democratic Government in Bougainville. However, political progress is not sufficient if it does not go hand in hand with essential economic and social development. Therefore, it is essential for the donor community to support the establishment of sustainable economic and social conditions by channelling resources towards infrastructure, education, health and development projects. In these efforts, reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-combatants should be promoted. That in turn will contribute to a peaceful transition to a political future for Bougainville.

Finally, I wish to express once again Mexico's gratitude for the work carried out by Ambassador Sinclair and his staff, whose commitment has been reflected in positive progress towards achieving a lasting solution to the conflict in Bougainville.

Mr. Smirnov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Our delegation too is grateful to Ambassador Sinclair for his thorough briefing. We thank the representative of Papua New Guinea for further clarifications on the peace process. We support the efforts of the parties in implementing the Bougainville Peace Agreement and we welcome the commitment of the Papua New Guinea Government and the Bougainville communities to a peaceful settlement.

We note with satisfaction the positive progress in the peace process and the constitutional stage that it has entered as a result of the successful completion of stage II of weapons disposal. This was possible on the basis of broad-based consultations and the confidence that was placed in the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB). We also highly commend the work of UNPOB, headed by Mr. Sinclair, in moving forward and achieving results in the peace process. Much work remains to be done, and there are concerns that not all parties concerned are involved in the peace process. We believe that the political efforts of UNPOB and the Papua New Guinea Government must be continued, and we fully support these efforts. We believe that the UNPOB mandate will be successfully completed within the established time frame.

We greatly welcome the regional efforts made, including the activities of the Political Monitoring Group, which completed its work on 30 June. We hope that the Bougainville Transition Team, comprising Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu, will accomplish its mission and contribute to the successful implementation of the peace process. We believe it is important to continue and intensify cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme and other bodies of the United Nations in supporting regional organizations and the post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building processes in Bougainville.

Mr. Antonio (Angola): I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on the situation in Bougainville. I should also like to express my thanks to Ambassador Sinclair and to our colleague from Papua New Guinea for this briefing, which provided an update on the situation in the territory.

My delegation highly appreciates the progress in the political process since the adoption of the Bougainville Peace Agreement, particularly the significant improvement in the constitutional aspect. The Bougainville Constitutional Commission has been working to arrive at a consensual Bougainville constitution. The Peace Monitoring Group, whose

mandate expired on 30 June, has been succeeded by the Bougainville Transition Team. The completion of stage II of the weapons disposal plan has been verified and certified by the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB). We welcome all those achievements; they are proof of the unequivocal determination of the people of Bougainville to reach peace. Therefore, we should like to join those who have called upon Mr. Francis Ona to join the positive trends that are occurring in the territory.

A new Bougainville constitution is a central part of the implementation of the Peace Agreement. It is therefore important that the draft constitution be finalized and submitted to the Constituent Assembly of Bougainville for adoption as a step towards the achievement of goals set for the transitional period, an essential element in the shaping of Bougainville's future. With the completion of stage II of the weapons disposal plan, the constitutional process can proceed swiftly with a view to holding elections as soon as possible.

My delegation would like to express its satisfaction at the increased cooperation between Papua New Guinea and Bougainville. The spirit of commitment and trust between them has also been demonstrated in other areas, such as the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants into society and the rebuilding of infrastructure.

My delegation hopes that Bougainville will be one more case of a successful post-conflict situation. Peacemaking and peace-building are often closely interrelated. That interrelationship requires a comprehensive approach in order to preserve the results achieved. We are convinced that the United Nations will continue its sustained peace-building efforts in Bougainville, in particular to address pressing issues of security and stability in that area by establishing and increasing the capacity of the local political structures.

My delegation encourages the recently created Bougainville Transition Team to monitor fulfilment of the commitments assumed in the Action Plan. In that context, Angola welcomes the contributions of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu. We also support the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme and of other agencies in this post-conflict rehabilitation period. We express our gratitude to the donors — particularly countries in the region — for their assistance. It is also gratifying to hear renewed commitments with regard to the future sustainable development of Bougainville.

In conclusion, we should like to commend the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville and to express the hope that it will continue to work to achieve the goals set out in the Bougainville Peace Agreement, which, in our opinion, remains a consistent objective in shaping the future of Bougainville.

Ms. Menéndez (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank Ambassador Sinclair for his briefing today and to congratulate him on his work at the head of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB).

We have noted with satisfaction the positive developments in the fields of disarmament and the political process in preparation for autonomy, despite the fragility of the processes, about which Ambassador Sinclair himself informed us.

Actually, I have little to add to what was said by the delegations that preceded me, so I shall limit myself to asking a question of Mr. Sinclair. In his statement, the subject of cooperation between UNPOB and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to ensure a smooth and effective transition in the post-UNPOB phase was very interesting to me. He said that there is a series of consultations between UNPOB and the UNDP on a number of issues to develop joint efforts and a joint approach. I should like to know if he could be a bit more specific as to what those areas of cooperation would be in order to ensure such an effective and smooth transition in the future.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to express my appreciation for the convening of this public meeting to inform the Council of the recent activities of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB). In addition, I am grateful to Ambassador Sinclair for his briefing, and I thank the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea for his statement.

We welcome the completion of stage II of the weapons disposal plan, a process that UNPOB has facilitated and accelerated. We welcome the holding of broadened consultations with the national Government, political leaders, leaders of various factions and the people of Bougainville themselves, which has given everyone the opportunity to discuss the progress in the

peace process. In that connection, one of the most important elements is the strengthening of mutual trust and of the sense of security in the community. We particularly value the fact that the completion of this process allows Section XIV of the national Constitution, the new organic peace-building law, the autonomous Government of Bougainville and the elections to enter into full force.

We recognize the importance of the new Constitution as central to the implementation of the Peace Agreement of August 2001, which is why we emphasize the considerable progress achieved as well as the active participation of the island's population. In particular, we consider the second draft, which was finalized in May, to be of great importance. Therefore, we believe it is essential that the Bougainville Constitutional Commission continue its work, using that text as a basis.

Moreover, we share the view expressed by a number of previous speakers that it is necessary to ensure that the international community support with the necessary resources a number of priority areas, such as finalization of the establishment of the Constituent Assembly in Bougainville. Assistance in preparing for elections is also essential.

We welcome the growing cooperation between the authorities of Papua New Guinea and the leaders of Bougainville. We reiterate our gratitude for the work done by the Peace Monitoring Group over the past five years and wish every success to the Bougainville Transition Team, which has recently begun its support efforts.

Like others, we recognize the invaluable contributions made by Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu, inter alia. We would like to highlight in particular the support that must provided in promoting trust in this peace process in the transition towards an autonomous Government.

Finally, we wish to note that, in order for peace to be sustainable, an effective administration and a viable economy must be established. Accordingly, the relevant bodies of the United Nations must coordinate their efforts in Bougainville closely with those of the international donor community in order to establish and consolidate peace. In this context, we welcome the efforts made by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund in the area.

In conclusion, we reiterate our gratitude to Ambassador Noel Sinclair and his team for the outstanding work they have done in Bougainville. We wish them every success in their future efforts to bring peace, security and stability to the people of Bougainville.

Mr. Khalid (Pakistan): At the outset, I would like to thank Ambassador Sinclair for his comprehensive briefing on the situation in Bougainville. I would like also to welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea at this table and to thank him for his statement.

Pakistan supports the work of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) and appreciates the efforts of all the parties which have worked to seek, facilitate and implement a peaceful solution to the conflict in that territory. We appreciate in particular the Government of Papua New Guinea's courageous decisions and strong commitment to peace. These have been crucial to the success of the peace process.

We welcome the completion and verification of stage II of the weapons disposal plan under UNPOB's supervision, which took place last month. This was a crucial step in triggering the constitutional process. That process will clear the way for elections for an autonomous Government in Bougainville next year, as well as the eventual holding of a referendum in which the people of Bougainville will exercise their right of self-determination, in accordance with the provisions of the Lincoln and Arawa agreements.

Pakistan strongly supports this path, which the parties have courageously agreed to follow. However, more needs to be done to encourage those groups which remain outside the peace process to join it. Peace is the only solution, and this process, painstaking though it is, remains its best guarantor. However, to sustain peace, it is crucial to promote and sustain socio-economic development. The two are indivisible. Therefore, we urge the donor community to contribute generously not only to the financing of the peace process but also to the promotion of long-term socio-economic development.

Pakistan regards the mandate of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville, which expires at the end of this year, as crucial for building peace as well as trust in that territory. We hope that the role of the United Nations in Bougainville will not end with

the expiry of UNPOB's mandate and that the United Nations will continue to work there and to stay the course in facilitating the full implementation of the peace process.

In conclusion, I cannot but express the wish that the very successful role of mediation and facilitation played by the United Nations in Bougainville could also be replicated in another, albeit far more longstanding and dangerous, dispute which remains on the Security Council's agenda — the issue of enabling the exercise of the right of self-determination by the people of Jammu and Kashmir, in accordance with the resolutions of the Council.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): We share many of the sentiments expressed by other speakers so far around the table, and I think that there is a clear message of Council support to which I want to add. We similarly thank Ambassador Sinclair for his briefing and, more importantly, for his effective efforts to promote lasting peace and to complete the mandate of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB). I wish also to thank our colleague the Ambassador of Papua New Guinea for his informative contribution to the discussion this morning.

We are encouraged by the progress that is obviously being made, as is apparent in both presentations, and we very much welcome the fact that the completion of stage II of the weapons disposal process has been verified. We support moving forward with stage III expeditiously and, hopefully, with the participation of all concerned. It is important to move forward.

We also particularly want to commend Australia and New Zealand, as well as Fiji and Vanuatu, for having taken such a positive initiative in supporting the peace process in Bougainville with the creation of the Bougainville Transition Team. This is an important element of regional support for the parties and, indeed, for the international community and the United Nations as a whole.

With less than six months left before UNPOB's mandate expires, we know that the United Nations and UNPOB will be working hard to ensure completion of the remaining tasks by December 2003, helping to create the basis for the establishment of Bougainville's autonomy. UNPOB and the parties will have our support and encouragement.

Mr. Chungong Ayafor (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Cameroon welcomes the convening today, at the request of the Government of Papua New Guinea, of this public meeting on the situation in Bougainville. We appreciate the excellent briefing given by Mr. Sinclair, who brought to our attention some very useful information on recent developments in the peace process in Bougainville. We welcome also the important information given to us by the representative of Papua New Guinea. These briefings are testimony to the unstoppable momentum of the peace process. However, challenges remain with respect to the establishment in Bougainville of an autonomous Government and to the holding of a referendum.

The completion of stage II of the weapons disposal process on 30 July last represents a significant step towards peace. We welcome the firm commitment of all the parties to this conflict, since the signing of the Lincoln ceasefire agreement, to work to restore peace and in particular to develop a new political dynamic on the island — one that is more respectful of the character and of the deep-seated convictions of the 185,000 men and women of Bougainville.

The excellent work of UNPOB remains vital to achieving this objective. We also appreciate the manifold and valuable role played to date by Mr. Sinclair, Head of UNPOB, and his team, particularly in speeding up weapons collection and helping to promote the constitutional process and to better inform the people of the stakes involved.

Regarding the Government of Papua New Guinea, its commitment to peace has recently been reflected in a number of actions and initiatives, which we view very favourably. Such is the case of the withdrawal, with the help of Australia, of the national Defence Force from Bougainville; of the participation, which we view positively, of the Government of Papua New Guinea in the Bougainville constitutional consultation process; and, above all, of the respect for the terms of the memorandum of understanding that envisages a mechanism for consultation between them on all aspects of implementation of the autonomy arrangements.

We also particularly appreciate the excellent work done by the States members of the Peace Monitoring Group (PMG), which have contributed to stability and to restoring confidence in the peace process over the past five years.

The creation on the margins of the 30 June 2003 Sydney, Australia, meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Pacific Islands Forum of the Bougainville Transition Team, which broadly inherits the competencies and means of the PMG, gives us the assurance that the risk that the peace process will break down is under control. In that regard, we wish to commend the Pacific States, particularly Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Vanuatu, for their noteworthy commitment to peace in Bougainville. We call on them to continue those efforts in order to accompany that province towards peace and development.

But to achieve that, the population of Bougainville will need to give the international community further indications of its will for peace. In fact, the success of coming stages depends mainly on that will and on that commitment to peace, as is only proper.

Concluding the constitutional process; completing stage III of weapons disposal, which should lead to a final decision on the fate of the weapons collected in stage II; and the holding of elections leading to the establishment of an autonomous Government: those are all steps that urgently involve the people of Bougainville. For our part, we are certain that they will be able to meet those challenges within a time frame that is in keeping with the UNPOB mandate, which will end on 31 December 2003. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that the ultimate objectives of the entire peace process are the development and the well-being of the people of Bougainville.

Until now emphasis has been placed on the political aspects of the process. The parties to the conflict, the international community and the various parties must make more of a commitment in the future to economic processes, without which peace and stability would be illusory. Therefore, the programme for the reintegration of former combatants will need to be a priority task if we wish to maintain, throughout the transition, a spirit of consensus that takes account of the particular situation of the parties and that ensures a climate of law and order. We welcome the actions already taken in that regard by the donor community, and the United Nations Development Programme particularly.

Peace in Bougainville is possible. It is within our grasp. One last effort is necessary to achieve it, and we are confident that the people of Bougainville and the international community will be able to achieve it, transforming this challenge into a new success for peace and development.

Mr. Boubacar Diallo (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to express my delegation's appreciation to you, Mr. President, for organizing this open meeting. It demonstrates well the Council's interest in the question of Bougainville.

Like other speakers, I too would like to thank Ambassador Noel Sinclair, Head of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), for his briefing on recent developments in implementing the Bougainville Peace Agreement. My delegation welcomes with satisfaction those recent developments, which confirm the hope aroused by the progress made in implementing stage II of the weapons disposal plan, of which we spoke here last March.

We are particularly pleased to emphasize the importance of having concluded stage II, which is crucial to the future of the island inasmuch as it opens the way to the constitutional process that should lead to autonomy. The report on that subject, officially submitted to the Government of Papua New Guinea by the Head of UNPOB on 29 July, makes clear reference to this.

In addition, the recent deployment to Bougainville of a civilian Transition Team after the departure of the Peace Monitoring Group is to be welcomed because it signals a short-term settlement of the question of Bougainville and the cessation of UNPOB activities in December 2003, in accordance with the Council's earlier decision.

While we should be pleased with the progress made, my delegation believes that there are still important challenges to be addressed. The effective participation of all the protagonists in the ongoing peace process and the reintegration of former combatants are priorities, in order to reach a final settlement of the conflict.

In that context, we are also convinced of the crucial need to ensure the economic development of the island, without which peace cannot be a sustainable reality. That is why we reiterate our appeal to the donor

community to become more fully involved for the economic and social development of Bougainville.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to UNPOB for the tangible results achieved in implementing the Bougainville Peace Agreement. Finally, we encourage the civilian Transition Team in its efforts to restore peace and stability.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish at the outset to thank Ambassador Sinclair, the representative of the Secretary-General, for his very comprehensive briefing. I also appreciate the briefing by the representative of Papua New Guinea.

On 29 July, Ambassador Sinclair submitted to the Government of Papua New Guinea a report verifying and certifying the completion of the work of stage II. The relevant Papua New Guinea constitutional amendment and the new organic law have begun to be formally implemented. Implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement has yielded preliminary results, for which the Chinese Government feels greatly encouraged.

At present, the Bougainville peace process continues to face the task of weapons disposal in stage III. Important work, such as establishment of a constituent assembly to review and adopt a constitution and the holding of elections for an autonomous Government, will be successively carried out.

I shall discuss a few points concerning the peace process.

First, efforts should be continued to step up the weapons collection programme. Success in creating a constitution and holding elections will depend upon the success of the weapons collection programme. We appeal to the various parties to be flexible in order to reach a consensus on how to dispose of the weapons already collected and to conclude the work in stage III. This will help promote confidence among the various parties and will increase the sense of security among the people of Bougainville and their confidence in the peace process.

Secondly, former combatants should be reintegrated into society and plans should be made for them. Weapons collection and disposal is only one element of the security situation. Only by successfully reintegrating the former combatants and guaranteeing that they lead stable lives will security risks be eliminated. China greatly appreciates the work done by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in this regard.

Thirdly, the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) and the Bougainville Transition Team (BTT) should continue to play an important role. Under the leadership of Ambassador Sinclair, UNPOB has made positive contributions to the peace process in Bougainville. China appreciates and will continue to support the work of UNPOB. At the same time, we appreciate the important role played by the outgoing Peace Monitoring Group during its tenure. We welcome the establishment of the BTT.

China encourages UNPOB to continue to conduct full consultations with the Papua New Guinea Government and the relevant parties, in order to try to consistently promote the achievement of the various goals provided for in the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

Mr. Raytchev (Bulgaria): We appreciate the convening of this open meeting on the situation in Bougainville. I join the previous speakers in extending our gratitude to Ambassador Sinclair for his informative briefing. We also thank the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea for his presentation.

Bulgaria welcomes the progress made since the last discussion concerning Bougainville in the Council, and we pay warm tribute to the work of Ambassador Sinclair and his team in Bougainville.

We highly appreciate the conclusion of stage II of the agreed-upon weapons disposal plan contained in the Bougainville Peace Agreement, verified and certified by the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB). The official presentation of the verification report by Ambassador Sinclair creates the conditions for the constitutional laws implementing the Bougainville Peace Agreement to become fully operational. It will open new opportunities for the people of Bougainville to exercise their right to self-government and self-determination, including through the election of an autonomous Government and the holding of the Bougainville referendum. In this context we welcome the efforts of the Bougainville Constitutional Commission.

The Peace Monitoring Group (PMG), in close collaboration with UNPOB, provided active and

efficient support for the Bougainville peace process. The decision of the PMG to curtail its activities is a positive sign of confidence in the sustainability of the peace process. We highly appreciate the readiness of Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu to continue their assistance to the peace process on the ground through the Bougainville Transition Team (BTT). We note that the civilian team of the BTT will cooperate with the United Nations observers in respect of the objectives of the Lincoln Agreement, subject to such terms and conditions as may be mutually determined in consultation between the United Nations and the Parties to the Protocol setting up the BTT.

We share the view that the neutral verification of the conclusion of stage II of the weapons disposal plan does not mark the end of the challenges to the peace process in Bougainville. We support the efforts of all parties to convince Francis Ona and his Me'ekamui Defence Force to join the peace process. We emphasize the importance of promoting dialogue and confidence, and we think that the progress towards stage III of the weapons disposal programme should not be hindered.

Finally, Bulgaria welcomes the contributions of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and other United Nations organizations to the peace process in Bougainville. We would appreciate more information with regard to post-conflict peace-building and sustainability and the contributions of those agencies during this phase of the peace process. We are specifically interested in their contributions to the process of reintegration and rehabilitation of former combatants.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as Representative of Syria.

We express our sincere thanks to Mr. Noel Sinclair, Head of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), for his comprehensive briefing, which shed light on the latest developments in Bougainville. I would also like to express our support to Ambassador Sinclair and his team, who have worked so diligently in support of the peace process and stability in Bougainville. We appreciate the efforts by the friendly Government of Papua New Guinea and the role it has played in support of the peace process in Bougainville, in addition to its positive contribution and collaboration, which we heard about in the statement of the representative of Papua New Guinea this morning.

There have been important developments since the last briefing of the Security Council, on 28 March 2003, creating a sense of optimism regarding the implementation of the necessary procedures to prepare the new constitution in Bougainville for election of the national Government. These developments include the completion by the Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) of its mandate last June; the succession of the PMG by the Bougainville Transitional Team, which includes 15 to 17 civilian observers from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu; and the adoption by UNPOB of phase II of the weapons disposal plan. We are looking forward with the same sense of optimism to the implementation of phase III of the plan.

Despite the positive comments that have been made today and the general sense of optimism that is prevailing, certain parties — in particularly Mr. Francis Ona and his Me'ekamui Defence Force — are still not participating in the peace process, and this is cause for concern. We therefore hope that the various appeals, and the other efforts that are being deployed, will eventually result in a clear commitment by those parties that are not participating in the peace process to refrain from taking any actions or steps that would hinder or delay the peace process. We also urge them to participate in the Bougainville peace process.

Once again, we reaffirm our support for the Head of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville and his team for their efforts to promote the peace process in Bougainville.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Fiji. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Savua (Fiji): It is my honour to make this statement on behalf of the following States members of the Pacific Islands Forum that are Members of the United Nations: Australia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Fiji.

Thank you, Mr. President, for giving us the opportunity to address the Security Council on the

subject of Bougainville. The countries of the Pacific Islands Forum have been actively engaged in supporting the Bougainville peace process for nearly five years, including through the Peace Monitoring Group (PMG), in which Australia, New Zealand, Vanuatu and Fiji participated. The PMG worked closely and cooperatively with the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB). Our support for the peace process is continuing through the deployment of the civilian-led Bougainville Transition Team (BTT).

Both the PMG and the BTT reflect the willingness of our region to work together to find solutions to problems facing one of our members. We firmly believe that, with the commitment and goodwill of neighbours — and working in partnership with the United Nations — we can work to address problems in our region, while acknowledging that, ultimately, long-lasting solutions must be found from within the country. Our role is to facilitate the process by encouraging and assisting the host nation to realize its own goals.

We are gratified that the Bougainville peace process has made substantial and encouraging progress. We note in particular that an important milestone has been passed with the recent verification, by UNPOB Director Noel Sinclair, of stage II of the weapons disposal process. With this development, the road is now clear for the necessary legal changes to be made to allow for Bougainville's autonomy. We encourage all parties to work to reach an early decision on the final fate of the weapons in stage III, which will result in the weapons being permanently removed from Bougainville communities.

The role of UNPOB is even more critical at this stage. It must remain seized of the import issue of concluding the formal peace process before its mandate expires at the end of the year. UNPOB will need to work closely with the United Nations Secretariat to find the best way forward in the remaining months of its time in Bougainville.

The establishment of an effective and affordable autonomous administration in Bougainville will bring with it many challenges. The Pacific Islands Forum region requests the Security Council to remain engaged with the Bougainville peace process in the crucial months ahead. Beyond that, we know that the support and encouragement of the international community and the United Nations system will remain important, as work to build a credible law and justice system, an effective administration and a viable economic base in Bougainville continues.

Our region has done all it can to get Bougainville where it is today. We appeal to the international community to help us carry these efforts further.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Australia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this open meeting on an issue to which Australia and, as my colleague from Fiji has said, all countries of the Pacific Islands Forum attach a great deal of importance. We, like others, are grateful for the comprehensive briefing provided by Mr. Sinclair. We are also grateful for the typically professional and comprehensive briefing provided by my friend and colleague Ambassador Aisi of Papua New Guinea.

We welcome the opportunity to address the Security Council this morning during its consideration of this issue. We have been a proud supporter of the peace process, including through our leadership of the four-country regional Peace Monitoring Group (PMG). During its five-year deployment, the PMG helped promote stability and build confidence in the peace process. This included crucial support to the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), particularly in implementing the agreed weapons disposal plan.

On 1 July, following requests for a continued regional presence beyond the PMG, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu deployed — as many have remarked this morning — the small, unarmed civilian-led Bougainville Transition Team (BTT). The decision to deploy the BTT demonstrates once again the capacity of the South Pacific community to work together to meet challenges to peace and security in our region. We are, of course, carrying forward that work at the same time as we are working in Solomon Islands — as all members are aware.

In many ways, the decision to withdraw the PMG and deploy the BTT also reflects the progress that has been made to date. This includes the negotiation and signature of the comprehensive Bougainville Peace

Agreement, and strong moves towards its implementation. Since the Peace Agreement was signed just under two years ago, around 1,900 weapons have been contained, a constitution has been drafted and the Papua New Guinea Defence Force has formally withdrawn from Bougainville.

We welcome the recent verification of stage II of the weapons disposal process by UNPOB Director Sinclair. Verification will bring into effect Papua New Guinea laws implementing the Peace Agreement and allowing for Bougainville's autonomy. We commend all parties for the determination and commitment they have shown to date, and urge them to press forward with the final stages of the peace process. In particular, parties must focus on reaching an early and credible decision on the final fate of the weapons that permanently removes the weapons from Bougainvillean communities. They should also move swiftly to plan for free and fair elections for their autonomous Government.

There is, of course, no room for complacency. UNPOB must remain seized of the important matter of concluding the formal peace process before its mandate expires at the end of the year. In particular, UNPOB should focus on promoting an early and credible stage III decision. The Secretariat in New York must be closely engaged and must provide the guidance to ensure that this occurs. In closing, we would note that although much has been achieved, the challenges facing Bougainville in the coming period are numerous, and include establishing an effective and affordable autonomous administration, developing credible legal and judicial arrangements, and encouraging economic development. Australia urges all parties to remain seized of these challenges, and is itself committed to providing the parties with ongoing support. We hope that the international community and the United Nations system will also stand ready to assist in these endeavours.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of New Zealand. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): Let be begin by recording my thanks to the Council for once again enabling this discussion of the peace process on the Papua New Guinea island of Bougainville to take place in an open meeting. This appropriately allows for input from the countries in the Pacific region that have been supporting this process for the last five years, politically, through the provision of personnel to the Truce Monitoring and Peace Monitoring Groups, and through the provision of development assistance.

Let me also express New Zealand's thanks to Mr. Sinclair and his team at the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), and to thank Mr. Sinclair for his presentation and update here this morning. Mr. Sinclair and his small Office have played a key supportive role in cementing peace on Bougainville, most recently by declaring that stage II of the weapons disposal process, that of secondary containment under a dual-key system, has been completed. This is a welcome development. Much is yet to be done, however, and it is crucial that Mr. Sinclair and UNPOB use their remaining five months on Bougainville to best effect.

New Zealand is pleased to learn of the plans to hold a meeting to discuss the final fate of the weapons, stage III, on Nissan Island off the Bougainville coast. That meeting should take place as soon as possible. The devastating effects of the ready availability of small arms have been felt for too many years in Bougainville; the damage that they can do to a society is now readily apparent in Papua New Guinea's neighbour, the Solomon Islands. To enhance future security for all Bougainvilleans, New Zealand urges the factions to agree that the final fate of the weapons contained should be no less than total destruction. UNPOB should strongly reinforce and encourage that approach.

New Zealand welcomes efforts to bring Francis Ona and his small group of followers into the peace process. However, I should stress, as I did when I last addressed the Council on this issue in March, that the peace process cannot wait for Mr. Ona. He has chosen to remain on the sidelines, and the process has progressed without him. If Mr. Ona wants to play a future role in the new Bougainville, the best way for him to do that is to engage in the peace process. But he should not be allowed to hold a veto over it; nor should his remaining outside of the process become a pretext for choosing a course other than the total destruction of weapons at stage III.

Like others, I should draw the Council's attention to the establishment of the Bougainville Transition Team, which was created to provide ongoing support to

the peace process following the departure of the Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) on 30 June. As Council members are aware, Team members from Australia, New Zealand and Vanuatu are now in place and are working well with the Bougainville community, and they will shortly be joined by personnel from Fiji. While much smaller than the PMG, the Transition Team demonstrates, as others have said, the ongoing commitment of regional States to the peace process. New Zealand's support for the Transition Team complements our ongoing commitment of other assistance to the people of Bougainville delivered through the New Zealand Agency for International Development.

The enduring support for the Bougainville peace process from States in the Pacific region has demonstrated our commitment to assisting neighbours in difficulty. The Pacific Island Forum-endorsed Regional Assistance Mission in the Solomon Islands is an extension of this approach, and New Zealand's commitment to assisting the Solomon Islands will be similarly long-term. Bougainville, for its part, is well on the road to lasting peace. The momentum now established by the declaration of the completion of stage II needs to be maintained while the United Nations Political Office works towards the completion of its mandate at the end of this year.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Motomura (Japan): First of all, I would like to thank both Ambassador Sinclair and Ambassador Aisi for having given us a comprehensive briefing on the current situation in Bougainville.

I would like to welcome the report submitted by the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) to the Government of Papua New Guinea on 29 July, which confirms the completion of stage II of the weapons disposal plan in Bougainville. The completion of stage II is indeed a demonstration of the commitment of the concerned parties to the attainment of peace, in particular on the part of the people of Bougainville and of the Papua New Guinea Government. This achievement is all the more important as it opens a new stage in the peace process and accelerates the progress towards the establishment of autonomy in Bougainville. We sincerely hope that this process will proceed smoothly, so that an election to establish an autonomous Bougainville Government may take place as soon as possible, hopefully some time next year. We also expect that UNPOB will make every effort to support this process as fully as possible until the conclusion of its mandate at the end of this year.

The Peace Monitoring Group (PMG), which completed its activities in June, played a major role in realizing the completion of stage II of the weapons disposal plan. Following its establishment in 1998, the Group also made a significant contribution by assisting in the conclusion of the Bougainville Peace Agreement, monitoring the peace and advancing the peace process. Japan expresses its great appreciation for the activities of the PMG and pays tribute to Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu, which participated in this operation. We hope that the Bougainville Transition Team, which has succeeded the PMG, will contribute actively to further promoting the peace process.

During the third Japan-Pacific Islands Forum summit meeting, hosted by my Government in Okinawa in May, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, Sir Michael Somare, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, and other leaders participating in the meeting set enhanced security in the Pacific region as one of the priority policy targets in the document adopted by the leaders entitled the Okinawa Initiative. Discussions aimed at taking substantive action followed, based on that document, and a joint action plan was also formulated, which includes concrete measures to be taken in order to enhance security in the region. On the basis of that plan, my Government intends to support promotion of the collection of small arms and light weapons in Bougainville. In addition, we are now considering extending specific assistance to Bougainville in the areas of education, health, medical services and infrastructure for the purposes of improving education and human resources development, stabilizing the life of Bougainvilleans and strengthening their economy.

The Japanese Government continues to pay close attention to developments related to peace in Bougainville and reiterates its readiness to extend assistance that it deems appropriate.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Mr. Noel Sinclair so that he may respond to

questions raised and provide the clarifications requested.

Mr. Sinclair: Before I respond to the questions raised by the representative of Spain and the representative of Bulgaria, I think it is my duty, first of all, to express my sincere gratitude to all speakers for the very kind and generous words addressed to the mission, to myself and to my staff for the work that we have done. We could not have accomplished what we accomplished there without the very positive and encouraging support that we have consistently received from the Security Council. And I should like to place on record our profound appreciation for the attitude that the Security Council has consistently maintained.

I should also like to express to the representatives of Papua New Guinea, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Japan my sincere gratitude and appreciation for their very kind and generous words addressed to myself and to the staff of the mission. Once again, I wish to place on record the importance that we attach to the generous assistance that we have received from the Peace Monitoring Group as a collectivity as well as from its individual Governments, as well as from those of Japan and Papua New Guinea.

The Government of Spain asked about the consultations currently taking place between the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with regard to securing the smoothest possible transition for Bougainville. There are four points I should like to make in that connection.

At this time, Bougainville enjoys the international presence of UNPOB, the UNDP and the Bougainville Transition Team (BTT). At the end of December, UNPOB will have withdrawn and it is expected that the BTT will withdraw. That will mean a very significant change for the people of Bougainville. Bougainville will have been functioning with a significant international presence for the past six years, and suddenly, on 1 January 2004, that presence will be withdrawn. The UNDP will remain, and, with the withdrawal of UNPOB and the BTT, it will have a tremendous responsibility — an even greater responsibility than it has now.

What I have been trying to do is to get the UNDP accustomed to that fact: it will be alone in its task of fulfilling whatever expectations Bougainvilleans may have of the international presence on the island. UNDP has been there for a number of years, and, in the phase that will begin on 1 January 2004, it will be there to assume all the responsibilities that devolve upon it. UNDP has the advantage of continuity, and I have been trying to encourage it to begin to prepare for assuming those additional responsibilities resulting from the withdrawal of UNPOB and the BTT.

We have not forgotten that Bougainville is now emerging from a war, a very serious crisis that destroyed not only physical infrastructure but also social and intellectual infrastructure. One of the first challenges that the Bougainvilleans will be facing in their new autonomous Government will be that of capacity-building. I believe that UNDP, being present after we have withdrawn, will have a very important role to play in terms of assisting Bougainvilleans in developing their capacities.

There was an administration in Bougainville that was effectively destroyed, in the sense that many of the people who were working there left the island during the crisis and others were killed — the whole system of administration was destroyed. A very small group of people now working under the Administrator is responsible for causing Bougainville to function, and that is quite a huge challenge for the very small resource base that the island now has. I believe that, after the end of this year, UNDP will be in a unique position where it can help, through its technical and other expertise, in developing and strengthening Bougainville's technical capacity. There is a need to rebuild capacity in Bougainville.

Moreover, one of the first priorities of Bougainvilleans right now concerns the question of law and justice: the putting in place of a police force. The police force and the justice system that existed in Bougainville have been destroyed. And it is not simply a question of restoring the service that used to exist, because Bougainville's police force had become so much a part of the crisis — so much a part of the Bougainvillean experience — that Bougainvilleans would like something different now. They do not feel that the Bougainvillean force that existed before has any credibility on the island now, and they have their own conception of what the new police force should be. It must be different from what it was before; it must be a force that is not as easily identifiable with the national Government as the one that existed before the crisis. They also have their own conception that it must be a law-and-justice system — a police force system —

that also makes use of Bougainvillean traditions and the Bougainvillean cultural experience.

It is one thing for them to conceptualize that, but it is something else to put it into practice. That will require many financial and technical resources, and I believe that UNDP is well placed to provide the resources that Bougainvilleans will need. It is true that, where the question of putting a law-and-order system in place is concerned, the Bougainvilleans are receiving a great deal of assistance from Australia and New Zealand. But it is clear to us that, after the end of the year, when UNPOB and the BTT withdraw, there will be room for a great coordinating effort on the part of UNDP in terms of channelling and bringing together offers of development assistance by countries of the region, including Australia and New Zealand.

There is no shortage of offers to assist Bougainville. Indeed, we have just heard a statement by the representative of Japan indicating the readiness of his Government to make assistance available to it.

I think that we have to avoid a situation in which we have a number of offers going in parallel in Bougainville. I believe that it is important that there be good coordination among all of these aid offers, and that the agency that is best placed to play this coordinating role is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). What we have been trying to do is to get the UNDP to think in terms of preparing itself to play such a coordinating role, so as to ensure that, as one era ends, a new era begins, and that the transition is as smooth as possible, without any gaps or holes that would prejudice the progress of the autonomous Government from the start.

During the past two years, we have also received offers of assistance from the United Kingdom and New Zealand intended specifically for community development in Bougainville. Unfortunately, that money is still lying unused, I say unfortunately because there is a great need for community development projects. I am trying to encourage the UNDP to put some criteria in place, so that such projects can begin to function immediately.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Sinclair for his statement and for the clarifications he has provided us on the latest developments in Bougainville.

There are no other speakers on my list.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.